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**US/Namibia clears more remnants of war**

They still lay abounded in the long silent fields, ready to release their explosive force still after the battles are done. The explosive remnants of war explode when disturbed by the unwary cattle, farmers and curious Namibian children who happen upon them while tending to their fields.

While working on a farm in Omawe just a few kilometres from Oshivelo, Emilia Shikalepo (51) and her daughters uncovered an unexploded 60mm mortar shell left over from the war. The shell detonated when she handled it, killing her and her youngest daughter, and severely wounding another and a family relative.

With efforts to stop continuous threats from such explosive, the Namibian of Defence (NDF) with support from the US Department of Defence (United States navy mobile unit) is conducting various Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) training programme across the country.

The purpose of the EOD program is to strengthen Namibia's institutional capabilities by training future instructors to identify and to clear out remnants of war threats including landmines, detectors, air-dropped bombs and missiles.

The US Ambassador to Namibia Thomas Daughton said when the US government first began working with the Namibian Defence Force on landmine clearance in 1995, major progress in locating and removing landmines have since been achieved.

“Our collaborative efforts over 20 years resulted in the location and removal of almost all landmines from Namibian territory. [With] more than 5,000 in total,” said Daughton, while speaking at a handover ceremony of \$126 000 worth of training aids and support equipment, as part of an EOD training project at the leopard Valley Military Base on the outskirts of Windhoek.

Despite the success, Daughton said more efforts are still required to strengthen the capability of the Namibian Defence Force and to conduct further EOD training in order to avoid harming innocent civilians.

“To contribute to that effort, the United States is donating training equipment and will continue to provide technical assistance to the NDF as it stands up its own training program on EOD techniques and procedures. Our ultimate goal [now] is for the NDF to have the full and

sustained capacity to respond to the lingering threat of the explosive remnants of war wherever they may be in Namibia,” said Daughton.

Speaking at the same event, Deputy Minister of Defence Billy Mwaningange said since the establishment of the EOD programme the US Government has been providing machinery during their credible assistance to the Namibian Defence force in the fight to protect the population from the hazard of mines and explosives in the former war zones.

In 2011, The US Department of Defence under the US African Command started training the Namibian Army members of the Engineer Corps and members of the Namibian Police (Nampol) Explosive Unit under the programme ‘Humanitarian Assistance Mine Action Training’, which have to date imparted commendable skill to members of the NDF and the Nampol respectively.

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